

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE**CONSTRUCTION SPECIFICATIONS****CONTOUR BUFFER STRIPS****1. General Specifications**

Procedures, technical details, and other information listed below provide additional guidance for carrying out selected components of the practice. This material is referenced from the conservation practice standard and supplements the requirements and considerations listed therein. Additionally, Kansas Agronomy Technical Note KS-34 provides information and guidance for carrying out the named practice components.

Required components of this practice including seedbed preparation, seeding dates, mixtures and necessary methods for establishment will be discussed with the cooperator and recorded in the case file using Form KS-ECS-4.

2. Establishment of Permanent Vegetation

The Kansas Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG), Section IV, Conservation Practice Standard and Construction Specifications 342, Critical Area Planting, shall be used as guidance for planting rates, planting dates, and adaptation and establishment of grasses, forbs, and legumes on contour buffer strips. For plant species, varieties, and adaptation information, refer to Kansas Plant Materials Technical Note 1 (Rev. 6).

Plant species which maintain stiff, upright and dense stems throughout the year are preferred in contour buffer strips to induce sediment deposition.

3. Wildlife Habitat Enhancement

Enhancing this practice to include wildlife habitat considerations is compatible with soil erosion and water quality concerns. Native grass mixtures including forbs and legumes shall be used for contour buffer strips when wildlife enhancement is a consideration. Plantings best suited for target wildlife species should be determined in consultation with the area biologist. The Kansas FOTG, Section IV, Construction Specifications 342, Critical Area Planting, Table 11, contains a listing of adapted native forb and legume species.

4. Contouring Critical Slope Length

The practice standard provides maximum hill-slope length for contour buffer strips in Table 1. Additional information is found in Kansas Agronomy Technical Note KS-34.

5. Management of Contour Buffer Strips

Mowing or haying of contour buffer strips shall meet the height requirements of the Kansas FOTG, Section IV, Conservation Practice Standard and Construction Specifications 511, Forage and Harvest Management.

Grazing on fields with contour buffer strips shall not be done during wet periods when hoof action will be detrimental to the buffer strips. Maintenance of vegetative density and height during critical water erosion periods must be accomplished for buffers to function properly. The grazing height requirements for water quality listed in the Kansas FOTG, Section IV, Conservation Practice Standard and Construction Specifications 528A, Prescribed Grazing, shall be used.

Contour buffer strips, with the exception of native grass/forb/legume mixes, may be fertilized to maintain plant vigor. Applications of fertilizer will follow the guidance of the Kansas FOTG, Section IV, Conservation Practice Standard and Construction Specifications 590, Nutrient Management.

Protect against the use of pesticides which may damage grass, forbs, and legumes established in the contour buffer strip. The Kansas FOTG, Section IV, Conservation Practice Standard and Construction Specifications 595, Pest Management, shall be used as guidance when pesticides are used.